



State of Connecticut

SENATE

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Dear Senator Cassano, Representative Rojas, Senator Fasano, Representative Aman and members of the Planning and Development Committee,

Thank you for the opportunity to testify in support of Senate Bill 295 AN ACT AUTHORIZING MUNICIPALITIES TO COLLECT THE MARIJUANA AND CONTROLLED SUBSTANCES TAX.

The state of Connecticut has had a marijuana and controlled substances tax in statute since 1991, but our state has not been capitalizing on its revenue potential. In the last three fiscal years, the state has collected an average of just over \$30,000 a year using this tax. If we are truly serious about trying to discourage and penalize drug dealing – which was the specific reason this tax was enacted – then we have to do better than that.

I have proposed this legislation before, and I believe it gives municipalities a financial incentive for stepping up their work to keep drugs out of our neighborhoods. Currently, state law allows the Department of Revenue Services to collect revenues that result from drug arrests. However, municipal officials who are already buried under paperwork and unfunded and underfunded mandates do not reap any financial benefit for referring their local drug arrest to the state for tax collection purposes.

Since the state is not making a great effort to collect this tax, I propose that we allow municipalities to do so, and allow them to collect 100 percent of the tax revenues. Not only could we see a greater effort to clamp down on drug dealing but towns and cities could see some extra revenue in a time where budgets have never been tighter. To put it simply: everyone but the drug dealers will benefit from this proposal.

In this economy, our towns and municipalities are looking to be as lean and efficient as possible. Providing an incentive to make better use of the marijuana and controlled substances tax already on the books would not solve our financial problems but would allow a little extra revenue to help towns make ends meet.

Thank you again for allowing me to testify on this bill and for considering this legislation.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob Kane".

Rob Kane
Deputy Minority Leader Pro Tempore